

9. EARLY RECOGNITION OF SEX IN THE JUVENILE FORMS OF *SITANA PONTICERIANA* CUVIER

(With two photographs and a text-figure)

While conducting field observations of the Fan-throated Lizard, *Sitana ponticeriana* Cuv., I collected many juvenile forms of this species. Detailed study in the laboratory revealed that, though the forms are immature, sexing is possible. The distinguishing characters are enumerated below.



Photo 1. *Sitana ponticeriana* Cuvier  
Male with its gular appendage distended

*Sitana* show distinct sexual dimorphism. The adult male can be easily recognised in the field by its multi-coloured gular appendage (Photograph No. 1).

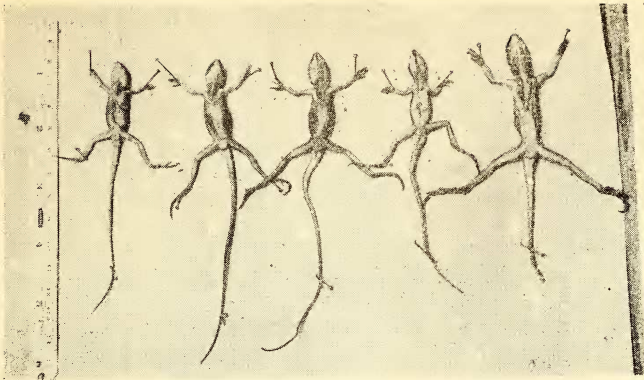
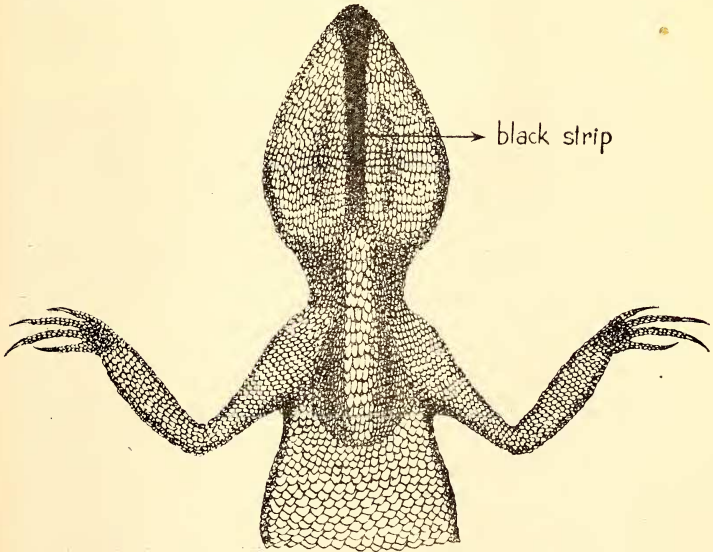


Photo 2. *Sitana ponticeriana* Cuvier

Figs. 1-4. Juvenile forms arranged according to the development of the gular appendage. Fig. 5. Adult



Text-figure. *Sitana ponticeriana* Cuvier

Ventral view, showing black strip

The specimens studied were collected from hills around Poona, namely Chaturshingi and Vetal Hills, during April, May, and June 1964. After killing with chloroform, they were arranged in the dissecting dish according to the degree of development of the gular appendage as shown in Photograph No. 2. This showed that the earlier stage is one where there is a beginning of the development of a black strip along the mid-ventral line of the lower jaw. This black strip in further stages goes on increasing posteriorly and simultaneously broadens as well. The text-figure shows the black strip. This conclusion was confirmed by dissecting the juvenile forms and ascertaining the presence of testes and hemipenes in well-developed condition.

It is not possible at this stage to give accurate information regarding the development of the gular appendage. This is only possible after rearing the young right from the egg stage in the laboratory, when the development of the gular appendage corresponding to the age, and the length of the individual can be correlated. This work has been taken in hand.

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#### 10. ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF THE CHEQUERED KEELBACK [*NATRIX PISCATOR* (SCHNEIDER)]

While out at Lake Beale, Nasik District, Maharashtra, on 30 December 1963, I saw a largish snake, dead and floating limply near the surface of the water. The prominent black and white markings indicated a Chequered Keelback (*Natrix piscator*), but one end was uniformly flesh-coloured and prompted a closer examination.

The pale end was found to be the rear half of a 20 in. eel (*Mustacembalus armatus*) locally known as Vambat, projecting from the fully distended mouth and foreparts of the 45 in. snake who had obviously over-estimated his swallowing capacity. The snout of the eel was noticeably red.

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